

LESSON 5

THE FIRST WAHI (REVELATION)

Slowly Muhammad (S) lost his interest in the business. He felt sad to see the Arabs fighting and killing each other. He did not like to see them worship idols and follow the evil ways. He did not know what he could do. He was neither a scholar nor a philosopher. He was neither a poet nor a speaker. In fact, he was not even educated. He wondered what he could do to help the Makkans.

He became more and more withdrawn from the world. He would go to a cave called Hira and pray to Allah quietly. He would take with him food and water to last for several days. His wife, Khadijah, would also bring him more food and water if he did not return home after several days. Khadijah wanted to help Muhammad (S) in every possible way to find the Truth. Muhammad (S) was forty years old, and his heart was restless in search of Truth.

Once, in the month of Ramadan, Muhammad (S) was praying in the cave of Hira when the Angel Jibril (A) (Gabriel) appeared to him. He was not expecting to see anyone in that lonely cave, much less an angel. He was, naturally, frightened to see Jibril (A). Jibril (A) greeted him and told him, "Read!".

As Muhammad (S) did not know how to read he replied, "I cannot read."

The angel squeezed his arm and embraced him tightly and commanded him again, "Read." Muhammad (S) again replied, "I do not know how to read." Angel Jibril, once again, for the third time, squeezed Muhammad's arm and embraced him tightly. Muhammad(S) felt exhausted but his heart was now ready to receive *Wahi*, the divine revelation. The Angel recited the first verses of the first *Wahi* and Muhammad (S) repeated after him,

Recite, in the name of your Lord,
who has created mankind from
a clot of blood.
Recite and your Lord is generous.
He taught man to write with pen,
and He taught man what he did not know.

al-Alaq 96:1-5

This was the first *Wahi*, the beginning of the revelation of the Quran from Allah to His last Prophet (S). This was the start of Muhammad's mission as Rasulullah, a Prophet and Messenger of Allah. Gradually, in the next twenty-three years, Allah completed the revelation of His last book, the Quran, to His prophet, to teach mankind His perfect religion, Islam.

Jibril (A) taught Muhammad (S) how to make *Wadu* (ablution) and say *Salat* (prayer). Then Jibril (A) left.

Receiving *Wahi* through an angel was a strange experience for Muhammad (S). He was fearful and nervous and immediately left for home. He had always shared everything with Khadijah. He wanted to tell all this to her. She might know what had happened to him and what could be done about it. As he reached home, he was shivering and was feeling cold. He asked his wife to place a blanket upon him. Then he told her of his strange experience.

She did not understand the nature of her husband's experience, but she knew of her husband's great qualities. So she felt confident that Allah would safeguard him from every evil force. She comforted him saying, "Allah will always protect you. You are kind to your relatives, you help the poor and support the weak, you comfort the orphans and the widows, you are hospitable to your guests, and you love truth. Allah does not harm such people. Allah saves and guides such people."

The next morning, she took Muhammad (S) to her old cousin, Waraqa Ibn Nawfal, a learned Christian who had studied the Bible. Waraqa knew that in the Bible Allah promised to send a new messenger who would comfort mankind and teach them good morals. Waraqa told Muhammad (S) and Khadijah, "I think it is the same angel Namus who earlier visited Musa (A) and other prophets as well. It seems that Allah has chosen Muhammad(S) to be His prophet. His people will persecute him and expel him for his teachings."

Who the prophets were and what they did, Muhammad (S) did not know exactly. Waraqa's words comforted Muhammad (S), but he did not have any knowledge of Bible. Muhammad (S) did not know how to read to find out about the mission of the prophets. He wondered what Allah wanted him to do for His cause. He asked Waraqa, "Why would my people persecute me for this? Waraqa replied, "No prophet can remain unopposed. Whenever a prophet brings the message of truth to the people they oppose him and show their hostility."

Muhammad (S) had to wait for some time. Allah, through Jibril (A), would teach His prophet about the work of the past prophets and about his own future mission for mankind. Allah would give to Muhammad (S) the knowledge of Islam, His final and perfect religion. No human being had ever had it or would have it so perfectly.

Points of review:

1. In the month of Ramadan, Angel Jibril(A) brought the first *Wahi* to Prophet Muhammad (S).
2. Prophet Muhammad (S) was scared; his wife, Khadijah, comforted him.
3. Waraqa Ibn Nawfal told Muhammad (S) that Allah had perhaps chosen him as His prophet.

Words to remember:

Clot of blood, hospitable, hostility, *Salat*, scholar, *Wadu*, philosopher, *Wahi*.

Important names

Jibril, Namus, Waraqa Ibn Nawfal.